

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 3370

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MX
SUBJECT: MEXICAN REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY
ADDRESS

REF: STATE 86289

1. LOCAL GENERAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS HAS BEEN VERY SLIGHT. MOST MEXICANS -- OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL, WELL INFORMED AND ILL INFORMED -- PROBABLY PERCEIVE SPEECH AS OCCASIONED BY AND INDISSOLUBLY LINKED WITH DETERIORATING SITUATION IN INDOCHINA (SEE BELOW). NO GOM OFFICIAL HAS PUBLICLY COMMENTED ON PRESIDENT'S SPEECH. SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILY, NACIONAL, APPENDED SUBHEAD TO REPORTAGE ON SPEECH NOTING: "HE DEVOTED 87 WORDS TO LATIN AMERICA IN HIS SPEECH." REPORTAGE IN MEXICAN PRESS HAS BEEN AMPLE BUT SPEECH WAS NOT PLAYED AS LEAD STORY BY ANY MEANS. EVEN POLITICAL COLUMNISTS, NEVER AT A LOSS FOR A FEW DOZEN PARAGRAPHS, HAVE LARGELY IGNORED THE SPEECH. SOME PAPERS GAVE RATHER PROMINENT PLAY TO "ANALYSIS" (WHICH DOES NOT APPEAR TO EMBASSY VERY PERSUASIVE) BY AP WRITER GEORGE GEDDA WHICH IMPLIED HARDENING OF U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD THIRD WORLD AS A RESULT OF EVENTS IN SEA. STRANGELY, SOME THIRD COUNTRY DIPLOMATS EXPRESSED SIMILAR NOTION TO EMBOFFS.

2. EVENTS IN SEA CONTINUE TO RECEIVE WIDE ATTENTION IN
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MEXICO. THERE IS SOME GLOATING BY COMMENTATORS ON THE FAR

LEFT AND BY PROFESSIONAL "YANKEE BAITERS". GENERAL REACTION TO INDOCHINA SITUATION, HOWEVER, IS ONE WHICH HAS SLOWLY DEVELOPED OVER PAST TWO OR THREE YEARS AND, DESPITE DRAMA OF EVENTS IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, THEY COME AS NO REAL SURPRISE. MEXICAN INFORMED PUBLIC IS FULLY AWARE OF THE EVOLUTION OF ATTITUDES IN U.S. PUBLIC OPINION AND OF U.S. POLICY IN INDOCHINA. MEXICANS WHO ARE BOTH INFORMED AND MORE OR LESS SYMPATHETIC TOWARD U.S. LOOK UPON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS INEVITABLE DENOUEMENT. THIS WAS VIEW EXPRESSED RECENTLY BY SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT TO EMBOFF.

3. COMMENT: THE PRESENT SITUATION IN INDOCHINA AND ITS EVOLUTION OVER PAST YEARS ALMOST CERTAINLY HAS A PROFOUND EFFECT IN MEXICO AS ELSEWHERE ON PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. AND ITS ROLE IN THE WORLD. IT IS, OF COURSE, TOO SOON TO MEASURE THE IMPACT CHANGED PERCEPTIONS MAY HAVE ON BILATERAL OR REGIONAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. ON THE IMMEDIATE AND PRACTICAL LEVEL, EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT INDOCHINA SITUATION, AS IT APPEARS TO BE DEVELOPING, WILL AFFECT THOSE RELATIONS IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY.

4. USIA MEDIA REACTION REPORT OF APRIL 12 PROVIDES DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PRESS COVERAGE ON PRESIDENT'S REPORT.
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